

First Metropolitan Community Church of Atlanta

AGENDA

Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting - October 21, 1990

Roll Call
Prayer
Approve Agenda

REPORTS

- Clerk's Report
- Treasurer's Report
- Senior Pastor's Report
- Committee Reports
 - +Administrative
 - Building
 - Historian
 - Lay Delegates
 - Membership
 - Office Volunteers
 - Stewardship
 - +Social
 - Birthday
 - Coffee House / Dinners
 - Special Social Events
 - +Community Outreach
 - AIDS Ministry
 - AIDS Outreach Sewing Guild
 - Bar Ministry
 - Coffee House
 - Food Banks
 - Newsletter
 - Publicity
 - +Worship
 - Audio-Visual
 - Flower
 - Music
 - Organ Committee
 - Worship Preparation
 - Ushering
 - +Christian Education
 - Bookstore

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

- Election of Two Board Members

Prayer

First Metropolitan Community Church of Atlanta

MINUTES

Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting of October 20, 1990

The meeting was called to order by the moderator, Rev. Reid L. Christensen, at 2:00 p.m.

The roll was called by Church Clerk Charles Cunningham. 51 members were present. (Quorum: 20% of 113 members = 23).

The moderator appointed two tellers: Jim Clark and Carolyn Matthews.

Prayer was led by Rev. Christensen.

An addition to the agenda under new business was a recommendation to the mayor.

A motion was made by Bob Sturdivant to make the election of the pastor the first order of business (ahead of reports, old, and new business). Seconded. Carried.

Ray Barreras made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded. Carried.

Chip Carson made a motion to call Reid L. Christensen by acclamation as pastor for one year with a renewable contract negotiated by the board of directors. Seconded. Carried unanimously with no nays or abstentions.

Minutes of the previous congregation meeting were read. Ray Barreras moved for acceptance. Seconded. Minutes accepted.

The moderator indicated Church Treasurer Richard George was out of the city and a treasurer's report was not available at this time. It was also announced that Richard resigned from the board of directors effective this date.

Bob Sturdivant moved that the pastor's report be received. Seconded. Report received.

The chair recognized Kathy O'Kelly and she was seated. Total present: 52.

There was no old business.

The first item under new business was the election of three people to the board of directors. The moderator explained that one 1-1/2 year term was open due to the resignation of Terri Hyatt. Two 1/2 year terms were open due to the resignation of Richard George and the position currently held by T.C. Williams who was appointed between congregational meetings to fill the vacancy due to the resignation of Jay Neely when he was elected District Coordinator.

Nominations for the 1-1/2 year position were: T.C. Williams, Al Brannon, Tom Lynn, Ray Wilson, Bill Selvaggio, and Sheryl Miller. Bill Leopard moved that nominations be closed, seconded by Sheryl Miller. Carried.

The chair recognized the arrival of Steve Douglass. 53 now present.

Each nominee was asked to make a short statement stating their qualifications and why they wanted to serve on the board of directors.

First ballot results were: T.C. Williams, 16; Al Brannon, 12; Sheryl Miller, 4; Ray Wilson, 18; Bill Selvaggio, 1; and Tom Lynn, 2. Before the second ballot was cast Sheryl Miller, Tom Lynn, and Bill Selvaggio withdrew.

Second ballot results were: T.C. Williams, 20; Ray Wilson, 21; Al Brannon, 12. Al Brannon withdrew.

Third ballot results elected Ray Wilson to the 1-1/2 year term on the board.

Nominations for the first half year term were: Tom Lynn, Bob Sturdivant, Sheryl Miller, Daniel Lewis, T. C. Williams, and Al Brannon. Steve Vargo moved that nominations be closed. Seconded by Carolyn Mobley. Carried.

First ballot results were: T. C. Williams, 13; Dan Lewis, 17; Al Brannon, 7; Bob Sturdivant, 6; Sheryl Miller, 1; Tom Lynn, 3. Tom Lynn, Sheryl Miller and Al Brannon withdrew.

Second ballot results elected Daniel Lewis to the first half year term on the board.

Nominations for the second half year term were: Tom Lynn, T. C. Williams, Sheryl Miller, Al Brannon, and Mike Robinson. T.C. moved that nominations be closed. Seconded. Carried.

First ballot results were: T. C. Williams, 24; Al Brannon, 17, Tom Lynn, 6; Sheryl Miller, 2; Mike Robinson, 3. Sheryl Miller and Mike Robinson withdrew.

Second ballot results elected T. C. Williams to the second half term on the board.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the \$52,300 budget as presented. Carried.

Rev. Emily Bel made a motion that the pastor be granted a \$100 bonus for the exceptional previous year of service. Seconded. Carried.

A motion was made to unanimously endorse our member and District Coordinator Jay Neely for the Lesbian / Gay Advisory Committee to the Atlanta mayor. Seconded. Carried unanimously. All members were encouraged to write to the mayor in support of Jay.

The meeting was adjourned by the moderator.

Minutes compiled from tape
recording of proceedings



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**FIRST METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
STATEMENT OF INCOME & DISBURSEMENTS
MAY 1, 1990 - SEPTEMBER 30, 1990**

GENERAL FUND	RECEIPTS	EXPENSES	BALANCE
BALANCE ON 5/1/90			\$1,770.88
MAY	\$4,254.23	\$2,988.71	\$3,036.40
JUNE	\$3,703.97	\$4,033.02	\$2,707.35
JULY	\$4,452.95	\$4,741.52	\$2,418.78
AUG	\$4,076.42	\$3,800.36	\$2,694.84
SEPT	\$4,266.45	\$3,911.11	\$3,050.18

BUDGET COMPARISON OF EXPENSES

LINE ITEM	BUDGET AMT FOR YEAR	EXPENSE THRU SEPT	BUDGET BALANCE
ADMINISTRATIVE	\$3,200.00	\$1,194.36	\$2,005.64
BUILDING	\$13,600.00	\$5,531.31	\$8,068.69
FELLOWSHIP SUPPORT	\$9,450.00	\$3,477.86	\$5,972.14
PASTORAL MINISTRY	\$19,500.00	\$7,838.25	\$11,661.75
OUTREACH	\$1,500.00	\$308.95	\$1,191.05
WORSHIP	\$4,800.00	\$884.99	\$3,915.01
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	\$250.00	\$0.00	\$250.00
NON-BUDGET EXPENSE	\$0.00	\$239.00	
TOTAL	\$52,300.00	\$19,474.72	\$33,064.28

EXPENSE BUDGET IS \$4,358.34 PER MONTH

AVERAGE EXPENSE FOR LAST 5 MONTHS WAS \$3,894.95 PER MONTH

EQUIPMENT ROOM

	RECEIPTS	EXPENSES	BALANCE
BALANCE ON 5/1/90			\$212.27
MAY	\$121.50	\$60.00	\$273.77
JUNE	\$541.00	\$342.99	\$471.78
JULY	\$33.00	\$140.00	\$364.78
AUG	\$125.00	\$326.00	\$163.78
SEPT	\$74.00	\$60.00	\$177.78

BUILDING FUND

	RECEIPTS	EXPENSES	BALANCE
BALANCE ON 5/1/90			\$588.40
MAY	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$588.40
JUNE	\$374.77	\$0.00	\$963.17
JULY	\$604.25	\$0.00	\$1,567.42
AUG	\$3,703.00	\$0.00	\$5,270.42
SEPT	\$435.00	\$3,975.00	\$1,730.42

AIDS MINISTRY

	RECEIPTS	EXPENSES	BALANCE
BALANCE ON 5/1/90			\$2,813.74
MAY	\$0.00	\$1,242.99	\$1,570.25
JUNE	\$0.00	\$176.69	\$1,393.56
JULY	\$117.00	\$0.00	\$1,510.56
AUG	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$1,410.56
SEPT	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,410.56

COFFEE HOUSE

	RECEIPTS	EXPENSES	BALANCE
BALANCE ON 5/1/90			(\$52.38)
MAY	\$672.20	\$1.47	\$618.35
JUNE	\$0.00	\$189.60	\$428.75
JULY	\$30.00	\$202.40	\$256.35
AUG	\$7.13	\$40.68	\$222.80
SEPT	\$7.40	\$78.36	\$151.84

ALTAR GUILD

	RECEIPTS	EXPENSES	BALANCE
BALANCE ON 5/1/90			\$92.71
MAY	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$92.71
JUNE	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$92.71
JULY	\$0.00	\$49.87	\$42.84
AUG	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$42.84
SEPT	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$42.84

ORGAN FUND

	RECEIPTS	EXPENSES	BALANCE
BALANCE ON 5/1/90			\$421.90
MAY	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$421.90
JUNE	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$421.40
JULY	\$60.00	\$0.00	\$481.40
AUG	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$481.40
SEPT	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$481.40

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

	RECEIPTS	EXPENSES	BALANCE
BALANCE ON 5/1/90			\$15.00
MAY	\$262.00	\$0.00	\$277.00
JUNE	\$0.00	\$5.00	\$272.00
JULY	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$272.00
AUG	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$272.00
SEPT	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$272.00

KITCHEN FUND

	RECEIPTS	EXPENSES	BALANCE
BALANCE ON 7/1/90			\$0.00
JULY	\$106.25	\$0.00	\$106.25
AUG	\$0.00	\$50.00	\$56.25
SEPT	\$334.13	\$364.73	\$25.65

GOLD C BOOKS

(PASTOR DESRETIONARY FUND)

	RECEIPTS	EXPENSES	BALANCE
BALANCE ON 9/1/90			0
SEPT	\$472.00	\$0.00	\$472.00

First Metropolitan Community Church of Atlanta

SENIOR PASTOR'S REPORT

Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting - October 21, 1990

The last five months have been a time of stabilization in the church. Consistent growth has been evident in many areas. The areas of continued concern are as follows.

1. SPIRITUAL GROWTH. Following an expressed need for repeating the workshop "Homosexuality and the Bible", three more sessions have been held in the past five months, one each by Rev. Marge Ragona, Rev. Leevahn Smith, and myself. All have come from different perspectives and had excellent attendance. This workshop will continue to be offered at least quarterly.
2. MINISTERIAL STAFF GROWTH. Rev. Leevahn Smith and J. R. Finney II have been added to this staff. Leevahn will be transferring credentials while J. R. is a deacon candidate. Chip Carson is preparing for the UFMCC ministry and will soon become Student Clergy. Lisi Adams is no longer a deacon candidate.
3. MEMBERSHIP GROWTH. Growth in this area has slowed considerably. We have received fewer people this period than previously. This, coupled with the fact that we continue to clean up the rolls, has reduced considerably our overall membership increase.
4. STEWARDSHIP GROWTH. A very disappointing area, only about one-third of the membership is currently making a financial pledge and using the envelope system for offerings. Most of the additions have come from new members in response to inquirer's class.
5. ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH. Somewhat better than in the past, there is still much work to be done. Our continued church growth will be severely limited until we successfully get members involved in the work of the church.
6. BUILDING MAINTENANCE / REMODELING GROWTH. This area is perhaps the greatest challenge and has been the most successful in the past five months. In addition to meeting budget requirements, over \$4,000 was contributed to undertake needed waterproofing improvements to the building. Additionally, the front of the building is currently being readied for new paint. A problem continues, however, in organizing consistent cleaning volunteers. See the committee report for further details about the activity of this continuing work.

A comprehensive report of my activities is provided the Board of Directors monthly and is available to anyone who wishes to see more detail.

Respectfully submitted,

Reid L. Christensen,
Senior Pastor

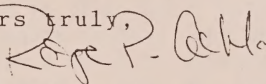
Coffeehouse Report

As the figures show, there has been an increase in the number of persons attending coffeehouse. From what I observe, the word is getting around once again that something special is happening on Friday nights. Though we're only offering a goodie bag, coffee, juice and a movie, this seems to satisfy those who attend. Beginning in November and lasting until the first of April there will be a decline in attendance due to the opening of night shelter during the winter months.

They are no longer allowed to smoke in the social hall or the bathrooms but are allowed to smoke in the lobby. I haven't had any problems with alcohol or fighting since I enforced the rules and they seem to respect them. Hopefully, I'll be able to start serving sandwiches again, if someone would donate the filling. I can buy bread at the food bank.

When special events such as district conference or the showing of the Quilt arises I have certain people that I can rely on to run the coffeehouse for me. I'm very grateful to Bob Ray, Carl Kuhles, Chip Carson, Mike Robinson and Ricky Walls for volunteering their time to come down and takeover for me.

I would also like to thank those people for their donations to the coffeehouse and food bank funds and to the money raised at the bake sales at congregational meetings.

Yours truly,

Coffeehouse Director

SPECIAL SOCIAL EVENTS

The Special Social Events Committee had a very busy spring and summer beginning with our kick-off potluck dinner and meeting March 3. Game night is scheduled for the fourth Saturday night of every month at the church. Our monthly activities have been as follows:

- April 21 - Silent Auction
- June 9 - Participation in Highland Festival
- July 4 - Annual Picnic
- July 21 - Six Flags Outing
- July 28 - Spaghetti Dinner
- August 4 - Stone Mountain Picnic and Laser Light Show
- August 25 - Weekend Trip to Lake Hartwell

Respectfully submitted,

Dottie Brock, chairperson

BAR MINISTRY COMMITTEE

We are currently distributing BASIC to Burkhardts, Bulldogs, Crazy Rayz, Deanna's, Buddies, New Order, Scandals, The Cove, and The Magic Unicorn. I would like to expand the distribution to the rest of the bars and other establishments within the community. Anyone wishing to join the committee can meet with me after the congregational meeting.

We are also working on a poster to be placed in the bars with the churches general information, such as, address, phone number, and service times printed on it. We will also have a space for a monthly calendar of events which will be updated when BASIC's are delivered. One of the bar managers has volunteered to help distribute the posters for us when we get them printed.

I have also been working with Deanna Collins of Deanna's One Mo Time to get a definite date for our choir to sing at the bar.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Selvaggio, chairperson

First Metropolitan Community Church of Atlanta

Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting - October 21, 1990

BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT

Following is a list of building maintenance projects completed since the last congregational meeting.

1. Major repairs to flashing and roof over sanctuary.
2. Replaced scuppers and downspouts on rear of building. Waterproofed rear wall.
3. Hauled off dirt and bricks from rear of building to keep water from running in exit doors.
4. Replaced air filters in heat and air system.
5. Repaired all seats in the sanctuary.
6. Replaced commode in women's room.
7. Recharged and hung all fire extinguishers.
8. Installed brass push plates on doors to Hose Hall.
9. Installed soap dispensers in men's and women's rooms.
10. Installed new gas heater in foyer/lobby.
11. Installed air conditioner in conference room.
12. Repainted lobby/foyer after much plaster repair.
13. Additional repairs to ovens in kitchen.
14. Additional sound proofing for pastor's office.
15. Scraped and water blasted exterior stucco walls in preparation for painting.
16. Repaired small Hammond organ.
17. Installed key cabinet in small office.
18. Installed gutters and downspouts on both tower rooms.
19. Installed new ballast (transformer) in women's room light fixture.
20. Hung new mini-blinds in conference room.

Respectfully submitted,

John Hall, chairperson

AIDS MINISTRY COMMITTEE - SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

Since I took over the AIDS Ministry committee last spring, not an awful lot has happened, but the committee has met at least once a month to discuss upcoming events and plans. I am sorry to report that the active membership of the committee has dropped to five including myself, but this has in no way dampened our spirits. During the summer Mike & Ricky helped 3 PWA's to move in new apartments, and I played 'taxi' on two occasions taking PWA's to their doctor appointments and other errands. Most of the members of our committee have been devoting most of their spare time to complete panels for 'The Quilt' showing by the Names Project earlier this month.

This past thursday evening (Oct. 18th.), 9 of us met in the reception office to discuss plans for the remainder of the year and into January. They are as follows:

The committee is looking for additional volunteers to help make 'Santa Stockings' which will be delivered to PWA's hospitalized over the Christmas holidays. We estimate that approximately 100 stockings will be needed. We will also give Christmas cards to those PWA's who receive meals from Project Open Hand, provided we either get enough cards donated, or unless someone wants to make them on a computer on colored paper. We are also planning to fill the church with poinsettias this Christmas. Sales begin today, and plants are \$10.00 each. We must place our order by November 15th. On the weekend of Jan. 25, 26 & 27, we will be hosting an AIDS PRAYER VIGIL and WORKSHOP. The Rev. Dr. Stephen Pieters of Los Angeles will be our featured guest for the entire weekend. Beginning January 1st., a massive media press release will be sent out to all local papers, radio & TV stations announcing Rev. Pieters visit and the weekend of events surrounding his visit. Look for several announcements and articles in future issues of BASIC regarding the ministry and upcoming events.

I have enjoyed being the chair this past six months, and will gladly continue in this position unless someone really wants to take my place.

Respectfully,

Bob Ray, Chairperson

USHERS COMMITTEE - SEMI ANNUAL REPORT

Since being appointed chair by Reid earlier this year, I have organized a group of about 10 members who have volunteered to be ushers at our various services. A schedule is made each month (although changed frequently) which plans on four ushers at our 11:00 AM service, three at our Sun. 7:30 PM service, and at least one on wednesday evenings. Ushers are also scheduled at special services as needed. Meetings and training have been held on the average of twice a month.

Anna Siciliano has shown great interest in becoming chair for the next term, and I would like to recommend that she be appointed to replace me as of November 1st. I have enjoyed being the chair of this committee, and will continue as an usher in the future.

Respectfully,

Mike Robinson, Chairperson

BASIC REPORT
TO THE CONGREGATION OF FIRST MCC-ATLANTA
October 21, 1990

I CIRCULATION:

- A 516 -- Direct mailing
- B 150 -- Distributed to 8 bars & 1 restaurant

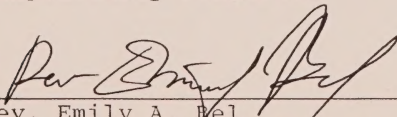
II FEATURES:

- A Regular Columns
 - 1) Pastor's Pen ----- By Rev. Reid Christensen
 - 2) Editor's Desk ---- By Rev. Emily Bel
 - 3) Deacons' Beacon -- By various, predominately
Deacon Candidate Bob Ray
 - 4) Bible Smarts ----- Edited by Rev. Bel from
book by J. S. Mitchell
- B Other Articles
 - Four by Trudie Barreras, one promoting the District Conference in November, one by Craig Harris, one by Tony & Ellen, one by Bill Lepard & Diane P., one by Rev. Marge Ragona, and one by Rev. Darst, (reprinted from Lifeline, MCC, Charlotte, NC)
- C Reports
 - 1) Coffee House Update --- by Roger Cobb, 6 issues
 - 2) Social Committee ----- by various, 3 issues
 - 3) Stewardship Committee - by TC Williams, 1 issue
 - 4) AIDS Committee ----- by Bob Ray, 3 issues
 - 5) Sunday Night Live ----- by whoever is leading the
Sunday evening services for that month, 6 issues
- D Other Regular Features
 - 1) Cartoon & seasonal Clip's
 - 2) Monthly Mediation Scriptures
 - 3) Bible Quiz & answers to previous month
 - 4) Birthdays for the month
 - 5) Calendar centerfold

III ADS:

- A) Monthly Overview
 - May ----- 11 -- \$ 75.00
 - June ----- 13 -- 107.00
 - July ----- 14 -- 115.00
 - August ----- 7 -- 54.00
 - September -- 6 -- 45.00
 - October ---- 7 -- 55.00
- B Total ads placed for six months: 58 ---- \$451.00
- C Money received for six months: \$274.00 ---- 39 ads
- D Outstanding ads: 19 ----- \$177.00

Respectfully Submitted



Rev. Emily A. Bel
Associate Pastor/BASIC Editor

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Congregational Meeting
October 21, 1990

This has pretty much been a committee of one for the 6 months that it has been in existence.

During that time, however, a number of germs have been planted. The Sunday night series on the Bible has led to interest in a Bible study to be held at another time, preferably Sunday morning. This is in abeyance, since the only room in which it could be held needs to be remodeled and refurbished before it can be used.

The November retreat is in the process of being planned and two women from outside the church have been enlisted as retreat leaders for a workshop in assertiveness training. This may be a valuable training session for the church and especially for the leadership of the church.

A small bit of education is being done in conjunction with the changing seasons of the Christian year with the bulletin insert which explains and describes the year, its seasons, and how the paraments fit into the scheme of the year. Many people new to a liturgical church know nothing about these customs and designs, and this can be a useful way of making the service more meaningful for them.

Christian education is also working on a special program for Susan B. Anthony day, and women's history month.

The Sunday evening preaching-teaching series has introduced those attending to the major themes of the Old Testament, with a historical perspective being used to introduce the major books of the Bible (and by December nearly the entire Bible will have been introduced in that perspective). The major themes of the New Testament are in the planning stage for the next year, along with a simple introduction to Christology planned for the Easter season.

Samaritan classes will be available here in Atlanta beginning whenever that institution decides to begin them. I have been invited to teach Church History, Christian Ethics, and Introduction to the Bible for the three upcoming terms through Samaritan's external degree program.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Marge Ragona

WORSHIP PREPARATION COMMITTEE

Congregational Meeting
October 21, 1990

Barry Bynum, Ken Cribbs, Roger Cobb, Tom Lynn, ⁵Cheryl Miller, with Rev. Marge Ragona as clergy representative comprise this committee. Barry and Ken have been inactive for some months, but were very active when the committee was first formed, and instrumental in getting the committee functioning.

The main task of the committee is to prepare the altar and sanctuary for worship, care for the altar ware, insure availability of communion elements and generally act as an "altar guild."

During the year that we have functioned as a committee, the following accomplishments have been recorded:

1. Raising the money through gifts for four pewter patens, a pewter pitcher, and a glass and pewter ciborium and tray.
2. Construction of a new altar from the wood in the old altar.
3. Construction of a new lectern for the scripture side of the altar.
4. Construction of boxes underneath the organ pipes in the front of the sanctuary to cover the holes left when the pipes were installed.
5. Painting all altar pieces to match the original pulpit lectern, and painting the back and side altar rails, the back auditorium rails and the two hymnal cases to match the altar area.
6. Purchase of new plexiglas to top the entire altar.
7. Dry cleaning of the usable paraments (the "Alleluia" cloth for Easter, the purple Lenten frontal and all other hangings that match these).
8. Purchasing, designing, and sewing new paraments, including a full frontal of white brocade for Easter, and short frontals for Pentecost (red) and Dominiontide (green).
9. A plaque was made to mount the memorial glass from the original MCC sanctuary of the L.A. church, and this has been moved from the front lectern to Hose Hall.
10. Beginning work on the Advent paraments (blue) and planning for the new Christmas frontal (white and gold), and an Epiphany frontal, to be made from the existing old green cloth. New matching pulpit hangings will be made to match this.

When these are completed, the church will have a full set of paraments for the entire church year, and will have a completely refurbished altar and lecterns, along with sufficient altar ware to serve communion to approximately 200 people per Sunday. Additionally, the altar ware has been kept polished and the table linens laundered and restored or replaced as needed. Daniel Lewis made three new white chalice veils, and a new white "fair linen" cloth was made to replace the very stained and dirty old one. This has meant that communion now is served in clean altar ware on a clean cloth, and it is the hope of the committee that this honors God.

This committee has also recommended colors that could be used in the sanctuary to brighten up the interior and to modernize the color scheme.

Here are more than 40 brief statements on Prayer. These have been quoted out of a variety of publications. Next to each statement please place a number from 1 to 9 - if you agree (9) or disagree (1). If you have feelings in between, choose an appropriate number. Consider your own prayer life as you answer.

(Circle) the five statements that were most significant to you and underline the five that gave you the most trouble answering.

Mark

1-9

- 9 1. Prayer is an action of love; it is choosing to meet God and other people and to live in mutual relationship with them.
- 1 2. They who have steeped their souls in prayer can every anguish calmly bear.
- 9 3. Prayer is so much the heart of religion that the two can hardly be divorced.
- 9 4. Earnestness is the first requirement for fruitful praying.
- 8 5. We know that fear blocks prayer. Fear is a barrier erected between ourselves and God so that God's power cannot get through to us.
- 3 6. Prayer is talking to God.
- 2 7. Pray to our God of the harvest to send folks out to reap it.
- 9 8. Prayer is the responsibility to meet others with all that I have.
- 9 9. As I used the unknown language which God has given me I felt rising in me the love, the awe, the adoration pure and uncontingent, that I had not been able to achieve in thought-out prayer.
- 9 10. The day you learn to be publicly specific in your prayers, that is the day you will discover power.
- 8 11. Not all persons can enter into the experience of praying with equal assurance, nor does it take the same form with all.
- 1 12. Prayer is another form of autosuggestion.
- 7 13. The worth of prayer depends much on the kind of God that really is.

- 9 14. One can believe intellectually in the efficacy of prayer and never do any praying.
15. Every word, every work, every labor of the Christian becomes a prayer; not in the
- 9 unreal sense of a constant turning away from the task to be done, but in a real breaking through the hard 'it' to the gracious 'Thou.'
- 8 16. We do not know how to pray worthily to God.
- 8 17. The 'matter' of prayer is supplied by the world.
- 9 18. People who don't believe in miracles shouldn't pray for them.
- 9 19. I wonder whether Christian prayer, prayer in the light of the Incarnation, is not to be defined in terms of penetration through the world to God rather than of withdrawal from the world to God.
- 9 20. The power of prayer is seen in improving our character, not in changing our circumstances.
21. A burden shared is a burden halved, and the
- 9 prayer of confession is a wonderfully wholesome and effective practice.
- 9 22. One's praying is affected by one's idea of God.
- 7 23. If by prayer I mean the power of words to persuade God to do things, then prayer is futile and foolish.
- 9 24. We must let God do the work. Almost always it takes longer than we think it should.
- 9 25. Sacraments...are the means of God's action, but prayer is the means of our response.
- 9 26. Prayer is not only talking to God; it is listening to God.
- 9 27. Freedom is fragile, handle with prayer.
- 9 28. To make time for prayer is to save time for work.
- 9 29. When finally we let the Holy Spirit into our innermost sanctuary, the reaction is to cry...deep soul-shaking tears, weeping rather than crying. It comes when that last barrier is down and you surrender yourself.
- 9 30. Tremendous power is made available through good people's earnest prayer.

31. I would start at the other end in teaching the discipline of prayer...not from chronos, time set by clock, but from kairos, waiting for the moment that drives us to our knees.

32. Pray for peace and grace and spiritual food, for wisdom and guidance, for all these are good. But don't forget the potatoes.

33. One's temperament makes a difference in what one may expect and receive from praying.

34. Praying while it has practical worth as yielding satisfaction, still has no solid foundation in reality.

35. In prayer, expressed or unexpressed, we shall certainly reveal our sincerity or insincerity.

9 36. God may say, "No!"

37. If I pray in a "tongue" my spirit is praying but my mind is inactive. I am, therefore, determined to pray with my spirit and my mind.

38. I am really praying for people, agonizing with God for them, precisely as I meet them and really give my soul to them.

39. In its working and effects, prayer is wholly subjective.

40. It is not a religious virtue to make one's private demands on God and the world and insist that the thing must be done whether or no.

41. Many people today find prayer unreal and do not pray.

42. Prayer and the common life are vitally connected.

43. It would not seem permissible to pray about such things as the weather or a drought.

44. Prayer is a high type of self-deception or self-manipulation.

45. Many earthbound mortals have departed almost completely from a serious prayer-life because they thought the essence of prayer is a medieval "way to perfection," and are benumbed by their failure to attain it.

46. An obstacle to the belief in prayer is the fact that the world now seems to be so law-abiding.

Amen!

WHAT DO THESE STONES MEAN?

by

J. R. Finney II

This is a summary of the 12 points highlighted and taught during this series.

FOUR GREAT STATEMENTS FROM THE WORD OF GOD

THE FIRST STONE OF REMEMBRANCE is found in Deuteronomy chapter 8, verses 17 & 18

Beware, lest you say in your heart, my hand and my power have gotten me this wealth. You shall remember the Lord your God for it is the Lord who gives you power to gain wealth...

The first stone of remembrance is a very practical warning. It is a fact that there is a tendency in all of us to think that we have earned with our effort, with our intelligence, with our application and with our skills the things we have in life. God would have us to always understand that it is the Lord our God who gives us the power, the intelligence, the skill, the ability and the opportunity to get the things we have in this life.

THE SECOND STONE OF REMEMBRANCE is a word from King David in I Chronicles chapter 21, verse 24.

No, but I will buy it for the full price, I will not take for the Lord that which is yours, or offer burnt offerings which cost me nothing.

David wants us to understand that when we talk about giving something to the Lord, that means giving something that cost of something. As we gaze on this second stone of remembrance, we are to always remember that we are not to offer to the Lord God that which belongs to another person, and we are not to make a sacrifice or offering unto God which cost us nothing.

THE THIRD STONE OF REMEMBRANCE is a word from the Lord Jesus Christ, Luke chapter 6, verse 38.

Give and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over will be put into your lap For the measure you give is the measure that you will get back.

Jesus is making what theologians call a Dominical Observation concerning the law of reciprocity; and Jesus is saying that the measure we give to the Lord will be and determine the measure we get back. Ask yourself, if God gave me ten times what I gave for the work of the ministry of God in my church, could I live on it? Understand that this stone of remembrance is a test of our faithfulness to God.

THE FOURTH STONE OF REMEMBRANCE is a word of Saint Paul, II Corinthians, chapter 9, verse 6.

They who sow sparingly, will also reap sparingly, and they who sow bountifully will also reap bountifully.

This is another statement on the law of reciprocity. There is no questions that in the context here, Paul is talking about our giving to the Lord God. Consider what you give to the ministry in this church as something sown seeking to produce a harvest. What kind of harvest can you reasonably expect from that which you have sown in this ministry.

FOUR GREAT PROMISES FROM THE WORD OF GOD

All of the promises come from II Corinthians, chapter 9.

THE FIFTH STONE OF REMEMBRANCE is verse 8.

And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything, and may provide in abound for every good work.

This verse contains in a nutshell, all that we need to know about the financing of the church, its ministries and the Kingdom of God. God's way to finance the ministry of the Church and the Kingdom is to so prosper God's people that they will be able to give all that is needed to provide for everything that God wants to do through this church.

THE SIXTH STONE OF REMEMBRANCE is verse 10.

God who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food,
will supply and multiply your resources, and increase the
harvest of your righteousness.

This is a great promise, that the Lord God will not only supply but will multiply our resources. Just as Jesus blessed and multiplied the fish and loaves of bread to feed a great multitude, God will also multiply our resources. But not only that, God will also increase the fruit (peace, love, joy...) that comes from our obedience and righteous living.

THE SEVENTH STONE OF REMEMBRANCE is verse 11.

You will be enriched in every way, for great generosity,
which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.

The Lord not only intends to prosper us financially but in every way. Why? So that we will be able to give generously of our monies, time and talents for the work of the ministry through our church.

THE EIGHTH STONE OF REMEMBRANCE is verse 13.

Under the test of this service, you will glorify God by
you obedience in acknowledgeing the Gospel of Christ.

This is a test of our stewardship over things to which we have been entrusted. What do you do with the days, talents, possessions that God has given you. What do you do with that with which you are able to earn and set aside. The promise is that when we give honorably, sacrificially, we will glorify God.

FOUR GREAT QUESTIONS FROM THE WORD OF GOD

THE NINTH STONE OF REMEMBRANCE is Psalms chapter 116, verse 12.

What shall I render unto the Lord for all God's bounty to me?

This is a very important question, because it sets the attitude right. We are not really earning the favor of God, although God is testing us at this point. But rather what we do is to be done because of God's great benefit and blessing to us. When we give to the Lord, it is in response to what God has done for us.

THE TENTH STONE OF REMEMBRANCE is I Chronicles, Chapter 29, verse 14.

But who am I and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly, for all things come from thee, and of thine own have we given thee.

Who are we anyway to think we are giving something to the Lord when it all belongs to God anyway. We are not giving anything to the Lord. It all belongs to God to start with. It is never how much will I give, it's how much will I since none of its mine.

THE ELEVENTH STONE OF REMEMBRANCE is comes from Malachi the 3rd chapter, and its a terrifying question.

Will you rob God? But you ask, wherein have we robbed thee. In your tithes and offerings.

What the scripture say is that we rob God in our tithes and offerings by withholding them.

What is the tithe? The tithe is the law of God and it stands for 10 percent of that which we receive. And what the scripture say is that 10 percent of what we receive belongs to the Lord. All of it belongs to God, but the way you and I acknowledge that is by giving 10 percent for the work of the ministry.

Offerings interestingly enough are over and above the tithe. We don't give offerings to the Lord until the tithe is paid.

I believe that every penny of the tithe is to go to the local church. I do not believe that it is the will of God for us to retain control over it and disperse it here and there at our own whims. I am NOT saying that you have to do this, but I am saying that I believe that that's God's will; and I think that that's what God expects.

Why will we in days to come when future generations of gay people and others ask why do we give so sacrificially to First MCC; we can respond that we believe that God says that if we honor God with the full tithe, then God will enable us to give offerings.

Bring the full tithe into the storehouse that there maybe meat in my house, and prove me thereby said the Lord, if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour down on you an overflowing blessing.

This is the one place in all of scripture that we are invited to test God out. Try it, you'll like it.

THE TWELFTH STONE OF REMEMBRANCE comes from I Chronicles, chapter 29, verse 5.

Who then will offer willingly, consecrating themselves today, to the Lord?

I read somewhere once that God loves a cheerful giver, but God will accept from a grouch. I'm not sure that that's true. I believe that God is so concerned with our motivation, that its probably better not to give, unless you want to. Unless you really are responding to the bounty of God's blessing, then I wouldn't do it. I just think that that's the better way.

Who then will offer willing, it can be under duress.

I believe that if we will study, meditate and allow these 12 points (these 12 stones) to become essential beliefs in our Christian walk; then when we offer ourselves as living sacrifices; when hen we strive by the grace of God to obey God fully; when we fail we confess it, pick ourselves up, brush ourselves off and push on; I believe that then we as Christians will release great blessings and glory on First MCC and everyone around us will sit and take notice.

MINISTERIAL STAFF MEETING AGENDA

September 4, 1990

Opening Prayer

REGULAR ITEMS

Pastor's Report
Attendance Report / Recommendations to Board
Reports on Assigned Projects -
Assignment Sheet Comments
Committee Structure Review
Monthly Reports

53 in coffee hour

J.R. Music CHAIR
Bill's Worship

OLD ITEMS

Retreat Update →
Bible Study Update -
Flag Sets
Gold C Booklets
Inclusivity Workshop / Hymn Sing - this week
Other

Nov. 10th + 17th
Malandra

NEW ITEMS

Purchase of New Brochures
Discuss Services
Sunday Evening Schedule
Sunday / Wednesday Evening Worship Order
Assignments and Procedure
Upcoming Calendar
Other-

Flag 4 x 6
gay
ames.
Fellowship

Closing Prayer

Cong Meeting - Oct 21ST

Contact: Rev. Marge Ragona
First MCC of Atlanta
800 Highland Avenue
Atlanta, GA. 30306
Evening # 404-875-7878
Day # 404-325-6439

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUSAN B. ANTHONY DAY AT FIRST MCC

Angry with the your religious heritage? Many women are! Susan B. was, too!

For the many lesbian women of the community who feel anger at the church/synagogue/mosque (or whatever) for its disavowal of them both as lesbians and as women, First MCC of Atlanta is holding a special Susan B. Anthony Day dinner and workshop.

Saturday, January 19th, the women of First MCC will be hosting a vegetarian dinner (provided at no charge) for those women who would like an opportunity to discuss with other women how their faith has or has not flourished in traditional religion, whether their experiences in nontraditional religion (i.e. gay churches, gay synagogues, etc.) has helped them recover their faith, or whether faith is now even a possibility for them.

Because this dinner is intended as space for women to be open with each other, no men are invited; but the men of First MCC will be staffing the kitchen and providing care for children of any women wishing to attend the dinner. There will be crafts and art materials, as well as games provided for the youngsters, and younger children will have a quiet area provided also. The meal will be vegetarian, so that women who abstain from animal products, or who would otherwise not be able to eat together, can also enjoy the meal; it will also be delicious.

Christian, Jewish, Unitarian, atheist, feminist, womanist, traditional -- whatever you call yourself -- you are welcome to come and eat and talk. The meal begins at 7:00 and the discussion immediately follows the meal. The final act will be a "burning of traditions" which separate us from our faith! Let us come together to support each other! If you are going to eat with us, please call Rev. Marge Ragona, 875-7878 in the evening, and make a reservation for the meal or call the church office at 872-2246 and leave a message.

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First
Metropolitan Community Church
of Atlanta



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of Atlanta

Encounters with Jesus must be personal or they are not going to serve God's purpose of bringing us into relationship with our Creator or preparing us to live in the New Creation. Again, however, organized Christianity has tended to develop a symbolic language to standardize what is the most individualized experience anyone can have in the spiritual realm. Often the question, "Have you accepted Christ as your personal Savior?" answered affirmatively, is considered "proof" that a person is a Christian. But what is this personal encounter? How do we know we have had it? What are the internal and external manifestations? Or, to apply one of the most commonly asked questions in the area of human emotional experience, "How do you know when you're in love?"

I recall one conversation I had with a sceptical friend early in my "faith walk". I was talking glibly about "meeting Christ" and she asked me bluntly what on earth I was talking about. I began to flounder and temporize. No, I hadn't had any visions; I'd read alot and been inspired by nature, and was beginning to get a glimmering of what it was to have really close friendships with other people which led me into a deep feeling of spiritual rapport with them. But I had to be honest that this didn't completely explain what I thought had happened to me. And the idea of meeting the Spirit within, and recognizing the presence of God in my own internal response to the stimulation of my senses and the interactions I had with other humans was just a dawning awareness.

I think if I had the same conversation today, I would be quite a bit more confident. Still, to be truthful I need to admit that I am still greedy for a somewhat more immediate and sensual encounter with Jesus; perhaps I threw away something much more valuable than I ever guessed by not selling my mineral collection when I was twelve, because never since have I had an experience, dreaming or waking, which came close to the quality of the dream encounter I described. Although Joan of Arc was one of my childhood heroes, I have never "heard voices" or been involved in what C. S. Lewis describes as an encounter with "the Numinous".

One of the Gospel stories which I have not so far used in this series is the story of "the woman at the well". Although she is not one of Grassi's "hidden heroes", the Samaritan woman discussed in the Gospel of John (4:7-41) strikes me as an amazing omission. I'd like to first read this account in full; it is an extremely long story, as Gospel narratives go, which makes it all the more obviously an incident of great importance.

This story is usually cited as significant for several reasons. First, it shows that Jesus was uniquely unprejudiced in his culture. The woman herself is amazed: "How can you ask me for a drink?" Second, Jesus clearly makes the transfer from material to spiritual frames of reference: "If you knew who is asking, you'd ask me...Whoever drinks the water I will give will never be thirsty again...I will provide living water and give eternal life." Third, the woman immediately makes the leap of faith and takes Jesus at his word. She is ready to make a per-

sonal commitment on the spot. Yet this gives Jesus the best opportunity I can think of in the Gospels to emphasize that there is something beyond the individual commitment which is necessary; there is the community aspect as well. "Go call your husband and come back here." When it is established that she has no husband, and that furthermore Jesus knows all about her lifestyle and is still more than prepared to dialog further with her, she gets the notion of going back to town and bringing out all her friends to be part of this amazing experience. Finally, perhaps the most startling aspect of this account is Jesus' own statement to his disciples "I have food to eat that you know nothing about...my food is to obey the will of God who sent me and finish the work I was given to do!"

That work in this context is bringing people into confrontation with their own realities, and getting them in turn to share those realities with one another. The final word of the story is the one which completes the cycle of witness and encounter, however; "We believe now, not because of what you said, but because we ourselves have heard him, and we know he is really the Savior of the world."

One of the main themes of feminism in recent years has been "telling our stories". Women have realized that history has been hopelessly skewed by the masculine images which have been held up as the cultural norms and ideals. Whether it is male heroes in most books or male images of diety, we have had so much of the masculine mystique that many of us are hard-put to find our own values and identify the things which are important about us. Jesus, obviously, was able to "cut through the cultural crap" and find ways of getting to the heart of the stories of the Samaritan woman and the other people in that village. I believe that Jesus expects us to do much the same thing today. As we are brought into encounter with Jesus, we are even more importantly brought face-to-face with ourselves and the demand to share our reality, not our masks, with one another. In line with this idea, then, I'd like to take a few minutes now to make sure that I have honestly shared with you who I am and where I'm coming from. I have deliberately written no notes here, because from this point on, I think I need to let the motion of the Spirit be free and unbound. If I start to flounder, that will be my signal that I need to stop, and return to my more formal notes.

* * * * *

Since Jesus sought these intimate encounters with people, I think we are safe in assuming that they represent a true aspect of the main thing which is necessary in bringing about the New Creation. Jesus never, as far as I can see in the Gospel stories, interacted with people in anything other than a cooperative, person-to-person way. He didn't dominate or order folk around. He served in the most menial way possible by washing the feet of the apostles at the Passover Seder which became his last supper. He **asked** Peter, James and John to "watch" with him in Gethsemane, but nobody was coerced into doing it, and there were obviously no penalties for their failures. He "commanded" evil spirits and the winds and waves, but I don't recall any incidents of his commanding other people. Indeed, a major temptation which he rejected was to "command" the stones to become bread for his

own personal refreshment. A few of the healing miracles involve what we would call an "preremptory command": "Get up, pick up your mat, and walk", "Be cleansed", and so on. But even when someone was brought to him for judgement, like the woman taken in adultery, he didn't "pull rank" in judging either the woman herself or her accusers. Although that story is intriguingly ambiguous about just what Jesus **did** do that caused the accusers to slink away in confusion, it makes emphatically plain that Jesus was not into any sort of domination or coercion activity. God, in the picture Jesus gives, has clearly established the rule that you need to make your choices of your own free will. The only acceptable motivation for serving God and joining the New Creation is love. Fear, greed, lust for power, recognition or any other benefit is simply not going to cut it.

